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AN
ADDRESS
TO
PERSONS AFFLICTED WITH
DEAFNESS.

THE

NEW

EDITION

OF

THE

WIDOWS

TO

THEIR

DEATH

AND

THEIR

CHILDREN

AND

THEIR

AN
ADDRESS
TO
PERSONS AFFLICTED WITH
DEAFNESS,
PARTICULARLY
THE OBSCURE CASES,
DENOMINATED
NERVOUS DEAFNESS;
WITH COMMENTS
ON
THE METHODS HITHERTO ADOPTED
OF TREATING
THESE COMPLAINTS,
AND
MORE RATIONAL PRACTICE POINTED OUT.

William
By W. WRIGHT,

SURGEON AURIST IN EXTRAORDINARY TO HER LATE MAJESTY.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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**H**AVING in my former Essay on the Ear, described the formation, explained the uses, and pointed out the diseases of the organ of hearing, which I accompanied with some general remarks, as to modes of curing, and cautions for preventing the complaint, it will be unnecessary to repeat them in the present work, which is intended more immediately to take into consideration, the methods that have ob-



tained of treating nervous deafness, or cases said to be of that nature.

In performing this duty, which I owe to the public, as some small return for the confidence reposed in me, and with a view to render this address to those afflicted with deafness, more extensively useful, all technical phraseology will be studiously avoided.

To the respectable part of the medical profession, I again acknowledge my numerous obligations, fully satisfied, that they will consider every reasonable attempt, to throw fresh light upon the curative process of a most distressing



complaint, hitherto very imperfectly understood, even by the most enlightened general practitioner, as deserving of commendation; particularly as it is universally acknowledged, that no class of patients, have ever been more the victims of *ignorance*, and *imposition*, than those who labour under a deprivation, or diminution of the sense of hearing.

W. WRIGHT.

28, *Henrietta Street*,

*Covent Garden*,

*December, 1819.*

P. S. With a view to prevent disappointment, to persons desirous



of consulting me, on account of deafness, I feel it expedient to mention, that I am at home from *twelve* till *four*, on TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS, and FRIDAYS; but at no other periods, except by *previous engagement*: and further, that I cannot attend patients at any other place than my own house, where I have the requisite comforts and conveniences to render my assistance more advantageous to them, and satisfactory to myself. Confinement, through illness or accidental injury occurring to the organ of hearing, of course are an exception to the above arrangement.



AN  
ADDRESS TO PERSONS  
AFFLICTED WITH  
DEAFNESS.



It is well known to most general practitioners, that a diminution of the sense of hearing may derive its origin from an infinite variety of causes, and present varied appearances, and complicated symptoms. Amongst a large proportion of patients no visible defect is observable in the natural formation of the ear, neither is there any perceptible disorganization in the structure, except, that the small glands



from whence the cerumen or ear-wax exudes, do not perform their office ; consequently the whole of the auditory passage is either totally dry, or in some instances is incrustated with a collection of sordes, or scurf. Many, and indeed most of these patients complain of continual or periodical noises in the head and ears ; by some, this imaginary noise is compared to the roaring of the sea, by others, to bells ringing at a distance, the singing of a tea kettle, the buzzing of bees, whistling like birds, or a beating noise resembling blows struck with a heavy instrument a considerable way off ; and I have had a distressing case, where the patient could scarcely be persuaded but that screams were uttered in the room : these obscure cases have, by



the generality of practitioners, been denominated nervous deafness. There are, however, many cases said to be of the same description, but which really are so simple in their nature, that no man of competent abilities, or even honesty, will suffer them to go out of his house unrelieved.

The late Mr. Saunders introduced, as his own discovery, the use of mercury, blisters, &c. in cases of this nature, and claimed the merit, whatever it might be, arising from those modes of treatment; but they produced such little alleviation of the complaint, and proved so very unsatisfactory to his own feelings, that in a few years after he published his work, in which he gave the results of his researches to the world, and ridiculed the



opinions of the more ancient authors, (probably in some particulars justly) he retired from practice as an aurist, declaring he did not think any cure existed for this species of Deafness. Yet this discovery, of which Mr. Saunders appropriated to himself the merit, (if any exists) of administering mercury in obscure cases of Deafness, did *not* originate with *him*, but is borrowed from Riverius, who lived about the year 1646, and who, in his chapters on the Diseases of the Eyes and Ears, mentions that Fonseca, and Alexander Trajanus Petronus, both recommend the use of mercury, even to salivation, in all affections of those two senses that will not yield to other remedies; in fact, Mr. Saunders uses so precisely the same mode of reasoning,



that there can be little doubt as to the source from whence he obtained the idea, any more than that many other parts of his work are embellished versions of Du Verney, whose Treatise on the Organ of Hearing was translated into English in 1737. The failure of Mr. Saunders himself to afford relief by this method of proceeding, and the number of repeated failures since, surely ought to have convinced its warmest advocates, if reasonable men, of the total inefficacy of this plan of treatment: it is still, however, persevered in, and patients are flattered by a promise of a certain cure, till, if even young and healthy previous, their constitution materially suffers from the experiment; and if advanced in life, when it is generally so dangerous to introduce



mercury into the system, premature old age, rheumatic pains, or paralysis, are frequently the consequence: or apoplexy terminates the existence of the misguided patient.

A *new idea* has been promulgated, as to the cause of deafness in these obscure cases, and if I may form an opinion from the number of patients that have consulted me, after being under the treatment of the discoverer, (who claims *great merit* for his *discernment*,) *he* either does, or affects to consider it as a very general cause of the complaint. According to his statement to patients, the membrana tympani, commonly called the drum of the ear, (and by which name I shall hereafter call it in these pages) has become thickened, and is in consequence



insensible to the vibration of sounds; that this thickness is to be removed by the introduction of some preparation, also discovered by this person, and peculiar to himself. The process is, I understand, painful and tedious: it requires very frequent attendance, *and of course, fees*: I do not, however, find the plan succeeds, *at least, as regards the comfort or amendment of the patient*; for amongst many whose ears I have examined, before all this thickness was *said* to be removed, but who were fatigued with the process, and promises of a cure, or exhausted with the expence, I never saw, in any one instance, an appearance of this thickening of the drum of the ear; and by my mode of examination of that part of the organ of hearing, I not only see the



drum of the ear distinctly myself, in almost every case, but can as clearly shew it to an attendant friend of the patient's; in fact, during the whole of my practice, I declare that I never saw any tendency to this supposed thickness, except in cases where some ulcerative process had been previously going on, and the disease having subsided, the matter left in the auditory passage, became hardened by the air, and remained at the bottom of the external auditory passage; this, however, is most easily removed, by filling that passage with a very diluted tincture of soap, and the judicious use of a syringe filled with warm water; and the small pieces of skin, triumphantly exhibited to patients by this gentleman, as portions of what clouded their auricular sense, are



nothing more than the sordes or film which even the soap lotion, mentioned before, or a few drops of Goulard's extract (as it is vulgarly called) in water, will bring away. Indeed they may be shewn to patients in greater abundance, if corrosive or acrimonious preparations are used, which are so injurious, that no practitioner of common sense would resort to these applications ; for such is the delicate structure of the ear, that the case is frequently rendered incurable by these methods ; yet a gentleman paid sixty guineas for attendance upon his son, into whose ears two drops of liquid were put every day. The gentleman told the aurist he could not afford to continue his attendance, and observed, if he had the prescription, he could drop the pre-



paration into the ears. The prescription was, after several applications, given to him, and on taking it to his friend, a surgeon, who had persuaded him to ask for it, the valuable remedy was found to be *a few grains of lunar caustic dissolved in rose water!!!* This application is corrosive and astringent, and when there is no cerumen in the auditory passage, which was the case with the above patient, it does not appear reasonable to expect such a favourable indication could be produced by such a remedy. This leads me again to repeat the assertion made in my last essay, p. 36, “*That the*  
“ *practitioner, however high his rank,*  
“ *who occasions pain in the examination*  
“ *of the human ear, or even in performing*  
“ *the common operations necessary for its*



*“ relief, in cases where no considerable  
“ ulceration or polypus is formed, cannot  
“ be sufficiently acquainted with the struc-  
“ ture of that delicate organ, to entitle  
“ him to confidence.”*

The inconsistency of this story, as to the thickening of the drum of the ear, appears so evident to persons even not acquainted with the anatomy of the part, that a lady of rank, who afterwards consulted me at Bath, dismissed the discoverer from his attendance on her, being, as she expressed herself, fully satisfied that he was either a fool himself, or imagined she was one. And a solicitor of eminence having received an opinion that his daughter's case was an opacity of the drum of the ear, thought it so extraordinary, that he sent for his family



surgeon, and Mr. Astley Cooper, both of whom would scarcely believe such an incongruous idea could have entered the mind of man, and proved its fallacy, by extracting a quantity of indurated wax, which, acting as a mechanical obstruction, alone caused the deafness.

Blisters and setons are also too generally recommended, but their utility is so little evident to me, that I have long since discarded them in most cases, well convinced that they are often injurious ; I have observed in several instances, where other practitioners have advised blisters behind the ears, without taking into consideration the tendency to erysipelatous, or scorbutic affections, which evidently existed in the patient ; the evil tendency of them has immediately



shewn itself, and become very troublesome, producing not only a discharge from the auditory passage, but considerable swelling of the whole external ear; and this action once excited in some constitutions, is not allayed without considerable difficulty. I have now a patient under my care, whose case was originally one of those obscure instances of deafness, which probably might have been relieved by a simple liniment, medicine, and a gargle; but having placed himself under the hands of an advertising gentleman, has now a purulent discharge from both ears, occasioned by repetitions of blisters; and a polypous excrescence has formed at the bottom of the right ear, which can only be removed by extraction.



Another *professed wonderful discovery* has been made, that by plugging up the external auditory passage with *scented cerate*, the Eustachian tube, (which is the inner passage leading from the cavity on the other side of the drum, into the part of the throat above the palate) will cleanse itself if obstructed with mucus; this has been *forced* upon the attention of the public in every *possible* way so *frequently*, in conjunction with the name of the inventor, that much as I should wish to avoid discussing the subject, which is almost *too ridiculous* to deserve a *serious* refutation, I feel I should not be discharging the duty I propose performing, if I suffered it to pass in silence; for, although to persons of mere common sense, this appears to possess such a de-



gree of inconsistency, that the discoverer has, to my knowledge, lost several sensible patients, by adhering most pertinaciously to his plan; yet, as the afflicted are not always in full possession of their faculties of discrimination, and what most they hope are often taught to believe, it is proper to observe, that the external ear is separated from the internal, by the membrane called the drum, through which, when the ear is in a state of health, there is no passage whatever for air. To persons possessing anatomical knowledge, it is not necessary to address these observations, as they will see that it is the most *absurd* doctrine ever set forth to the world, that the exclusion of air from the external ear, can force the internal ear to cleanse itself of obstruc-



tion; certainly, patients, after having their ears thus plugged up for a time, may, when the plugs are removed, be persuaded they have received benefit; but amongst many who have been subjected to this treatment, I never either saw or heard of one that was relieved by it.

This method of proceeding, indeed, reminds me of a man who pretended to cure blindness, and whose practice was, to make all his patients lie down on the floor, in a room of which the curtains were closed, or it was otherwise darkened, he then dropped some of his *invaluable* nostrum\* into their eyes; im-

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\* Made of prepared calamine stone, vinous tincture of opium, and rose-water; two drachms of which, worth about one penny, were sold for twenty-two shillings.



mediately after, covering each eye with a piece of dough ; and whilst they lay in this situation, light was secretly admitted into the room ; the dough was taken off, and if any sight remained, after the temporary deprivation, they were more sensible of it, and thus gave the *doctor* an opportunity of obtaining fees, which from several individuals, I am informed by the mayor of the city where it occurred, amounted to even an hundred pounds each, in a short time ; but after all this expence and trouble, their highly-raised hopes being disappointed by finding no real amendment, several of them sunk into a state of most pitiable dejection, from the failure of the expectations this quack had raised, merely for his own emolument.



Another new invention is announced, of an instrument for injecting liquids into, and inflating, the Eustachian tube, from the back part of the mouth; this instrument is professed to be similar to that of Monsieur Guyot. I noticed M. Guyot's plan in my former work, and gave an extract from the papers of the Academy of Sciences, to whom Guyot proposed it, about the year 1724; I also stated, that this gentleman had never attempted to carry his plan into execution, and after a full consideration of the anatomy of the parts, it was rejected by the Academy as *impracticable*, and even *impossible*. I have, as well as the late Mr. Wathen, frequently performed the operation through the nose, but it is by no means to be depended on for relief.



Persons who do not possess anatomical knowledge, will see in a moment, that this operation by the mouth, now announced, cannot be performed with any chance of success; for the orifices of the Eustachian tubes are situated from an inch to an inch and a half above, but behind the palate, and any tube to convey a liquid to those orifices by the mouth, must be curved upwards, and also laterally, and being obliged to pass the palate, must in the operation, touch it, and would inevitably produce vomiting; for we all know, that even a feather applied to that part will do so. If even the operator could reach the orifices of the Eustachian tubes, by this method, I am convinced, from having often passed a fine tube into them through the nostrils,



that no dependance, as I have before observed, is to be placed on it. As to inflating the Eustachian tubes, if they are closed up, in consequence of ulceration, neither this, nor any instrument will open them; if they are clogged with mucus, no instrument can enter them deep enough to cleanse them; and if they are not thus situated, there requires no instrument to pass air into them.

Patients often consult persons on cases of deafness, who do not make the treatment of complaints of the ear their peculiar study; in several instances I have been afterwards favoured with the result of these visits, and find the patient was desired to hold his nose, shut his mouth, and try if he could inflate the drum of the ear; and if he said he could, was



told the Eustachian tube then could not be obstructed, that his case was nervous and hopeless, and was advised to refrain from any further attempt to obtain his hearing. Really, to hear some of these gentlemen talk about inflating the drum of the ear, one would suppose it to be similar to a bladder, which, under their direction, the patient could fill out, or retract, and if he even fancied he experienced such a sensation as they describe, the Eustachian tube could not, according to their opinion, be in a state of obstruction ; but men of science well know, that it is a membrane furnished with muscles and nerves, to keep it spread over the cavity on the inner side of it, similar to the head of a drum ; and that the chain of small bones with their nerves,



are so firmly connected with this membrane, that frequent attempts of this nature are highly injurious, as I shall point out by and bye, when mentioning Count Orloff's remedy, as adopted by Mr. Grosvenor, of Oxford. Independent of this reasoning against the practice, the want of knowledge of the mechanical powers of the air cannot fail to strike a very superficial observer; for suppose the cavity beyond the drum of the ear, or the Eustachian tube itself, is in a state of obstruction, the pressure of air against that obstruction, will only impact it closer, and the drum of the ear receiving the impetus, may appear to become inflated, as these gentlemen call it; this therefore, to say no worse of it, is a most erroneous method of forming an



opinion, and may serve to amuse patients, but is neither a criterion of the supposed obstruction, nor a credit to men of common reasoning faculties.

One of these gentlemen, after giving the patient his opinion that the Eustachian tube was not obstructed, recommended the oil of eels to be applied to the external auditory passage, which was most assiduously persevered in for some time; but the fallacy of the above method of judging whether the Eustachian tube was obstructed or not, was never more apparent, for the patient was cured by a sternutatory which expelled the obstruction from the Eustachian tube, and consequently removed the complaint.

So very little is the structure of the ear understood, and so whimsical are the



ideas, as to relieving its complaints, that I have heard a medical gentleman assert in public, the whole internal passage of the Eustachian tube, and the cavity of the tympanum that is behind the drum, is filled with a liquid, which he states can be proved by freezing a head, and then opening it. I cannot tell what might be found in a head subjected to this process; but I am certain in a living head, in a healthy state, there is no such liquid to be found.

I have also heard the same person publickly recommend a piece of cabbage stump cut into a conical form, and placed in the external auditory passage, as an infallible cure for deafness; this is, in my opinion, nearly allied to the cerate plugs; as however it was not stated what cases



this remedy had benefited, I cannot tell whether the mechanical action of the moisture from it, upon a case of indurated cerumen, might not have induced the idea of its efficacy; I must however, from a knowledge of the properties of the plant, confess I am too incredulous, to think a trial of it worth recommending in any case of deafness, whilst we possess so many better remedies.

Some patients that I have seen, were previously under the care of practitioners, who professed the case would be cured, by moistening the ear every day with a fine camel hair brush, dipped in some liquid, and others who had had their throat tickled in like manner, with a feather or brush, at the rate of a guinea a visit. A most respectable surgeon



mentioned to me a case, where a gentleman had had his ears thus *amused* for a considerable time, and was assured by the aurist he should cure him, but only waited until the ears were in a favorable state, to perform the *grand operation*. The patient called on the above surgeon respecting other business, and mentioned his situation, and certain assurance he had received of a cure ; the surgeon thinking the story singular, requested leave to examine the ears, and finding it was only a collection of indurated cerumen, with a syringe and a little warm water, effected the *grand operation* by extracting the obstruction, and completely restored the hearing ; this might have been done at the first, or second visit, without any difficulty, or levying on



the patient such heavy contributions, I believe, above thirty guineas!!!

A gentleman recently consulted me, who had been assured by the person he consulted previous, that he should be certainly cured in three days, but was five weeks attending constantly to have his ears stopped with cerate, from which he derived no benefit; it was then proposed by the operator, to cut a passage through the nose, and roof of the mouth, in order to give him hearing, but the patient would not submit to it. What this intended operation was designed to effect, if he could even safely have performed it, which I must be allowed, from a thorough knowledge of the parts, much to doubt, I am totally at a loss to imagine, and really conceive if the pa-



tient had appeared firm, it would have been postponed *sine die*. On leaving this gentleman, the patient received a prescription for a liniment, and directions as follows :

Take of the Compound camphor liniment 1 oz.

Tincture of Spanish flies 2 drachms.

Mix and make a liniment to be rubbed into the ears once a day, with a bougie previously warmed.

The compound camphor liniment is made of camphor, solution of ammonia, and spirit of lavender mixed, and a certain portion distilled over, and alone will frequently bring off the skin; the addition of the tincture of Spanish flies to it, needs no comment.

The case of this gentleman being evidently a scorbutic affection of the auditory passage, and formerly a profuse



discharge, there can be little doubt of such a preparation increasing the evil, which was absolutely the fact; he was also troubled with habitual constipation, and how far sulphate of iron, commonly called green vitriol, and extract of bark, in pills, twice a day, as prescribed for him, would tend to relieve it, most persons will be able to judge. The case is also attended with obstruction of the Eustachian tubes, but is now amending very rapidly, under rational and mild treatment, of a very opposite description.

The above prescription *verbatim*, was given by the same person to another gentleman, with directions to rub it *behind* his ears; but the patient having called on him by *mistake*, did not consider it worthy any attention.



A gentleman consulted me some time ago on a case, pronounced nervous and incurable by some of the faculty at Edinburgh; he had laboured under the complaint about eight years. On examination I found a large piece of cotton wool in one ear, and indurated cerumen in the other, which being removed, there was an end of his *nervous* deafness.

I have seen many persons afflicted with noises in their ears, and on conversation with them, was at first of opinion the case was of that obscure nature, so commonly called nervous; but on looking into the ear, I have found detached particles of scurf lying against the drum of the ear, and in some instances, large quantities of a species of laminated sordes, through which the air passing, occasioned those



false perceptions of sound; but a removal of the substances gave immediate relief.

The opinion sometimes given by respectable surgeons, without troubling themselves to look at the case, that persons of advanced age are incurable, in consequence of a supposition the deafness has arisen through the natural decay of the organ of hearing, is very wrongly founded. Dr. T. Jameson, in his *Essays on the Changes of the Human Body*, attributes the deafness of old age, to rigidity of the delicate muscles, and ligaments of the chain of bones, conveying aerial undulations to the inner chamber of the ear, joined to the contraction of the Eustachian tubes, and the waste of moisture in the depositories of the soft portion of the auditory



nerve. This may, in some cases, be true ; but as we have no certain data, upon which to form our opinion, by a mere view of the case, it is no reason why alleviation may not be attempted: for I have found, whilst using endeavours to attain this end, I have succeeded in giving compleat restoration of the sense of hearing, even where the case presented all the symptoms of nervous affection, or appeared as the result of advanced age. Indeed to the gratitude of a respectable clergyman, aged 83, who had been deaf many years, and was considered incurable, that I restored to the comforts and enjoyment of the sense of hearing, do I owe the honor of being proposed by his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, as the Surgeon Aurist of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum;



and I am well convinced, if the Rules of that Institution had allowed the committee to accept the offer, and my plan of treatment could have had a fair trial, many of those unfortunate beings, now lost to society, would have had the sense of hearing, the faculty of speech, and been as interesting, as the fine girl that I had the honor of presenting to the late Queen, as well as to others of the Royal Family. As to the cases of those advanced in life, I feel it is my duty, as a public professional man, to attend most conscientiously to the comforts of those who consult me, by giving them the best exercise of my abilities; and from being averse to believe any thing, on the authority of others, without full investigation, and satisfaction in my



own mind, I examine every case upon its own merits, not regarding the age as a primary obstacle; and by adhering to this plan, I have succeeded in restoring forty-eight persons between the ages of sixty and ninety-two, inclusive, to the sense of hearing, within the last four years that I have kept a register of cases; many of whom, if I had been alarmed at their age, would never again have enjoyed the conversation of their friends, or what to most of them was of more consequence, could not have joined with that comfort which they now do in devotions to their God. I have had many persons of advanced age, whose cases have been alleviated in different degrees, and others who have proved incurable; but the proportion of failures is very small in



comparison with the success; therefore surely these are sufficient reasons, to induce practitioners to examine closely into the nature of every case that may present itself, without attending to the age of the patient in the first instance.

There are a variety of advertised specifics for deafness; some of these are in the form of snuff, and their object is to cleanse the Eustachian tube, by the convulsive action of sneezing, and producing a considerable discharge from the nostrils; but these nostrums are generally prepared by persons so totally ignorant, and are composed chiefly of powerful or deleterious ingredients, in order to make them strong enough to affect the stronger patients, that consequently they often prove highly injurious to those of



more weak constitutions. The chief active ingredients of these snuffs, which are variously disguised, are hellebore, pellitory, euphorbium, fox-glove; and some have the sulphate of mercury, commonly called turpeth mineral, or even corrosive sublimate, in their composition. With a view to make the sale of these nostrums answer the purpose of the proprietors, they actually have some person of low station in most cities, who for a share of the profits, will enter the habitations of the surrounding poor, and persuade them to purchase this invaluable composition, prepared by Dr. A. B. or C. D. of London—thus are the poor robbed, by these species of quacks, of petty sums. Another class of these locusts, sell infallible remedies for deafness,



being oils to apply to the external auditory passage, which they pretend are prepared of such costly materials, that it is almost given to the public, if sold at the price of from 11s. to 22s. for about two drachms. I have examined many of these oils brought to me by persons who have expended considerable sums on them, but afterwards came to me as gratuitous patients, and find these pretended valuable oils, are only common oil coloured with various ingredients; some have evidently had a herb, or weed, boiled in them, and boiling alone occasions them to become very acrimonious; others have some essential stimulating oil added, and being used to cases, where a stimulative ought to be most cautiously avoided, they often produce purulent discharges, ulcerations,



and even fungous excrescences. The real cost of these oils to the proprietor is not more than three-pence, including the bottle, which is by far the most valuable part.

Continual statements of cures performed upon A. B. C. D. &c. by that species of electricity denominated galvanism, being brought before the public, in medical and other journals, not only in cases of deafness, but most other complaints, it is necessary, consistent with my plan, to make some observations on the subject. I have paid great attention to the study of electricity, in a medical point of view, both as a species of amusement, and a practitioner, for these last twenty-five years, and I am also well acquainted with the opinions of the Father



of galvanism, in this country, whose abilities as a physician, chemist, and philosopher, are universally acknowledged; and from my own experience on that species of electricity produced by attrition, joined to his opinion on galvanism, and the number of patients consulting me, who have given both a trial, I am perfectly convinced no dependance is to be placed on either one or the other, for relief, in many very common cases of deafness; and that they ought never to be resorted to, except competent surgical or medical advice has first been obtained. That electricity will give an increased action to medicine is very well understood; but when we are told that it will cure obstructions of the Eustachian tube, I should be glad to know what species of



obstruction it was? and how any *mere operative electrician* ascertained it to be the cause of the deafness? Was it by the ridiculous idea of inflating the drum of the ear alone, that he judged it to be the cause? Probably he will tell us, how he “*employed electricity as a mechanical stimulus along the course of the Eustachian tube,*” because, I believe it is tolerably well understood, by *all* who know *any thing* of the anatomy of the ear, that the Eustachian tube runs from the cavity beyond the drum, towards the centre of the head, coming out nearly opposite the middle passage of the nose, in the upper part of the throat; and I confess my ignorance of any mode whereby the *course* of it can be galvanized or electrified in the living subject; as how-



ever this *electrician* now presumes to decide, what cases belong to the *surgeon aurist*, and what to other branches of the profession, and publicly announces that he is to be consulted at certain hours, he will probably accommodate the world with some new anatomical description of the ear, that his meaning may be understood. His assertion has certainly placed him in a very awkward situation, for if he wishes the public to believe him, it is incumbent on him to shew, that all the former anatomical descriptions, and the dissections of the ear, have been erroneous, otherwise, his “*employment of electricity, as a mechanical stimulus, along the course of the Eustachian tube,*” is impossible: on the contrary, if present dissections are correct, of which



I have the evidence of my own senses, he is detected in a *gross error*; and other assertions from the same quarter, will necessarily undergo a very severe scrutiny, before they can be received as *facts*!

He also says, he has discovered that most cases of deafness, fall more properly under the care of a *physician*, than a *surgeon aurist*; if he intends to say that medicine must be resorted to, there is no originality with him as to the opinion, for it is evidently borrowed from my former work on the ear, in which I seek to inculcate the principle, that medicine is the only sure dependance for relief in these cases of deafness, said to be nervous. I therein state, (page 16,) “*from experience, I am satisfied of the*” “*truth of my reasoning, that nine-tenths*



“ of the obscure cases of deafness, and  
“ vitiated hearing, must be attacked in-  
“ ternally, if we wish to conquer the la-  
“ tent enemy, and restore the comforts of  
“ our patients.” And page 33, “ Let it,  
“ however, be fully understood, that none  
“ of these external means can be possibly  
“ serviceable, unless medicine is also called  
“ in to aid them, and remove the inducing  
“ cause; therefore it will be evident, that  
“ although surgical aid will be highly  
“ necessary, and cannot be dispensed with  
“ in these instances; yet the physician  
“ can assist the restoration of the sense of  
“ hearing, or prevent a vitiation of it, far  
“ more than is commonly believed, and the  
“ mere operative surgeon must often be  
“ dependent upon medical knowledge.”

But in making this observation, I cer-



tainly do not intend to convey the idea, that surgeons are necessarily unacquainted with medicine; on the contrary, my meaning is, that the surgeon must depend on his medical knowledge, more than on his manual dexterity, in a great variety of cases. It is, however, no *small* proof of presumption, for a *mere electrician* to place his opinions before the public, in opposition to the first medical, and surgical characters in the world; for it is well known, *they* do not consider cases of deafness, to come within their province; which may be fairly proved, from the circumstance of physicians, and surgeons, sending their own relatives to the surgeon aurist: One of the late censors of the College of Physicians, having been my warm and much esteemed



friend, and many others, both fellows and licentiates, as well as members of the College of Surgeons, having repeatedly placed their most particular friends, dearest relations, and even themselves, under my care. At the same time I shall freely admit, that in many instances the aid of the family physician, who must be more acquainted with the constitution of the patient, is very desirable and advantageous, and consequently the surgeon aurist would be deficient in duty, and regard to his own credit, to neglect obtaining his opinion and co-operation in the case, wherever medicine is necessary to be exhibited.

That this *electrician* acts upon my principles, and does not depend upon the powers of electricity alone, I have suf-



ficient proof in my possession, for he has in deafness ordered *cupping*, and given *aperient* and *alterative pills*, in aid of electricity: no relief was however obtained, nor from the nature of the case was it at all probable those methods, if indeed any, could benefit the patient. I must be allowed however to remark, that this *electrician*, after appearing desirous of appropriating to *himself*, the observations of *others*, respecting the treatment of these obscure cases of deafness, and asserting that they do not come any more under the province of the *surgeon aurist*, than under the *operative electrician*, the latter of which I believe he is, goes on to disparage all efforts for the relief of most diseases, but those he thinks right to adopt, without offering any satisfactory



reasons, or sound argument, for his dissenting from persons who make that class of complaints their peculiar study. He also professes to cure all cases that are "*dyspeptic*," "*hepatic*," or "*nervous*," which the "*general practitioner cannot*;" but as he *prescribes cupping*, *gives medicine*, and *advises the use of nervines*, it is evident he does not depend on his electricity or galvanism; and a natural enquiry arises, how this accords with the province of an *electrician*, or the deference he formerly professed to have for the medical world, to whom it must be allowed, he pays no very flattering compliment in the present instance. He also assumes the merit of applying electricity to the region of the stomach, &c. How far he is entitled to that merit, may be



ascertained, by reading the published letter of the late Mr. Birch, surgeon of St. Thomas's Hospital, who applied it in the same manner, and recommended it above thirty years ago, since which all persons who have claimed any knowledge of electricity, have proceeded upon the principle, therefore it is no new discovery as appears to be insinuated.

In cases of redundant or indurated cerumen, this *electrician* takes upon himself to decide upon the most efficient remedy, and to prescribe it upon the authority of a person, he is pleased to call "*the celebrated Dr. Marriot.*" Not knowing any celebrated man of this name, I enquired of Mr. Callow, the Medical Bookseller, who this *electrician* could possibly mean, and had my ques-



tion resolved by Mr. Callow handing to me “*The Art of Healing*,” a work published by Thomas Marryat, formerly of Bristol, wherein I found the very directions alluded to. This celebrated doctor, like prophets of old, who we are told in sacred writ, have *no honour* in their *own country*, I know, from having lived at Bristol, was held in very little estimation there amongst persons of sense, being chiefly remarked for his eccentricity, and the general violence of his remedies; he had nevertheless considerable practice amongst the lower orders, at one period of his life, and his work has, like John Wesley’s *Primitive Art of Physic*, gone through many editions, in consequence of the poorer class of persons quacking themselves by it.



I certainly had given this electrician credit for more profound or even correct reading, and a greater portion of common sense, than to quote prescriptions from the work in question, to which I believe few men of science would resort, for such a purpose, any more than they would to the other work before-mentioned; and however this *electrician* may recommend his tedious process of pouring warm water into the ears, every night, upon *such* authority, the method of cleansing the ears, recommended in p. 37 of my former work, is far more simple, *safe*, and expeditious; I shall therefore repeat it here—Fill the external auditory passage, whilst the head is laid on a table, with a spirituous solution of soap, previously diluted with warm water, or



even an aqueous solution will answer the purpose; stop the orifice with cotton wool, pressed in firmly; in some cases, where the cerumen is very hard, let the solution remain for an hour, and in others considerable less time will suffice; then syringe with warm water, till the ears are perfectly cleansed, and if the deafness arises from this mechanical obstruction, it will be *immediately cured*, without resorting to the oftentimes dangerous use of hellebore root, or euphorbium, in the form of snuff, as this *electrician* considers necessary: and although he endeavours, for reasons *best known to himself*, to deprecate the use of topical remedies, or of the syringe, every reasonable person will conclude, such observations must be quite out of *his province*, for he cannot be



*supposed* to know any thing of the subject. Besides, I observed, when I looked at the directions given by his favorite “celebrated doctor,” that *he* advises syringing: Does this *electrician* dissent from such *high* authority? The assertion respecting the injury which the use of a syringe, or topical remedies, may do, like some of the preceding observations which I have noticed, are made without a shadow of reason, and I not only totally, and distinctly deny that there is any foundation for them, but affirm that the employment of proper topical remedies, or the use of the syringe in competent hands, have never in any one instance produced the smallest injury, and defy this *electrician*, or any one else, to prove such assertions to be true; on the contrary, it is a well known fact, that



hundreds owe the restoration of their diminished sense to these methods properly applied. I wish the same could be said of electricity; but I am not singular in believing, that although it has oftentimes been useful as an auxiliary, it has sometimes, like other powerful stimulants, been most injudiciously applied to cases, where it has produced even *fatal* consequences, therefore medical skill should *alone* direct this powerful agent. I am happy to say, that in addition to several respectable men, who have formerly turned their attention to electricity, it is now publicly practised near me by Mr. Price, a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, patronized by some of the first medical and surgical characters in this country, and I hope it will not again sink



into the disrepute it has done, through the enthusiastic opinions of *ignorant*, or the arts of *interested* men.

I have been consulted by several patients lately, who formerly received prescriptions from other practitioners, for sternutatories, or snuff, in which the powder of digitalis (fox glove) was a principal ingredient; this, in my opinion, is better omitted, as a more safe sternutatory may be formed as follows:—

Take dried and finely powdered leaves of asarum (asarabacca) three parts, and of marjorum one part, mix and snuff up the nostrils, a very few grains at bed-time.

A considerable discharge, attended with sneezing, generally takes place the following day, and frequently diminution of hearing, arising from accumulation of



mucus in the Eustachian tubes, and that description of deafness arising from bathing, are cured by this simple remedy. At first using, I generally advise it to be lowered by common snuff, lest it should prove too strongly stimulant: these remedies must not, however, be used, where there is evident fulness of the blood vessels about the head, or a tendency to apoplexy, and in all cases should be administered at intervals of one or two days.

Having mentioned masticatories in my former work, I find other practitioners have prescribed them. Mezerion may be used for the purpose; but being known to be highly acrimonious, heating, and irritating to the throat and fauces, ought to be used cautiously; therefore a very



thin slice of the root is sufficient, which being chewed, the secretion it produces from the salivary glands, will sometimes produce beneficial effects; but the saliva must not be swallowed. Where there is reason to believe, that a morbid superabundance of secretion in the membranous lining of the Eustachian tube, is the cause of the deafness, this mode of causing a derivation of it, may be usefully resorted to; and for the same purpose, squills, tobacco, angelica, or cloves, will also answer.

The cases of children born, as it is said, deaf, and consequently dumb, are generally believed to be without hope, therefore, little or no trouble has been bestowed on them, further than to give opinions as to the immediate causes why these



poor children do not hear ; these opinions do not go far enough to be useful to the public, for they only shew that by dissection in *one* case, the labyrinth of the ear contained an unnatural thick caseous substance. A little attention to the prevention of the evil, would be very meritorious in the medical world, and if they were only to consider that the same causes which occasion deafness in an adult, must operate far more forcibly on the tender frame of a child ; we should not have so many of these unfortunate beings. If medical men were once convinced of this fact, they would forbid those ablutions of new-born infants, and subsequent modes of treatment, which are now so ridiculously adopted, under the idea of rendering children hardy. A child was recently brought



to me, respecting whom an opinion had been given to the father, by an eminent surgeon, that it was a hopeless case, being, in his opinion, a species of malformation, because he conceived the child was born with this kind of solid labyrinth; some time after, I was consulted, and by patient investigation, discovered the child heard well till turned of twelve months; and questioning the parents closely, I discovered the child had been subjected to every chance of becoming deaf, from being suffered to run about almost naked, under the idea of rendering it strong, and healthy. If to nurses, or some parents, you urge the impropriety of these modes of treatment, the common answer is, that all the family have been treated in a similar way; but this is no solid reason, since of twenty



children all may escape, through the strength of their constitution, those evils to which the folly of nurses render them liable; but the twenty-first child, probably being of a more weak habit of body, becomes the victim of this dreadful affliction; therefore, as the twenty children would have done better without this treatment, or quite as well as with it, there is no great indication of prudence, or feeling, to subject *any* of them to the *chance* of an evil so dreadful, especially as it is *impossible* any good can be derived from the practice.

I have ever considered cases of the deaf and dumb, in the same light as other obscure cases of deafness, only that they are instances of an extreme extension of the evil, requiring long and persevering exertions to relieve; and find *topical ap-*



*plications* very useful auxiliaries in these, and all cases of obscure deafness.

Amongst others, for cases of the latter description, of a short standing, after the ears are well cleansed, some of the following liniments, applied by dossils of cotton wool, either gathered up on a little instrument I have invented for the purpose, (which may be had of Mr. Blackwell, the surgeon's instrument maker, in Bedford Court,) and so introduced into the external auditory passage, or placed therein by small forceps, every twenty-four, or forty-eight hours, simple as they appear, often prove very beneficial, by restoring the action of the glands, from whence the ear-wax exudes; they are at least as *reasonable* as the *oil of eels*, and far more pleasant to use.



Take Simple Cerate, one drachm,  
Oil of Sweet Almonds, six drachms.  
Mix and make a liniment.

It is necessary to mention, that chemists in general, do not keep this cerate, although ordered by the London College of Physicians; therefore I annex the form:

Take Olive Oil and Yellow Wax, equal parts,  
Melt the Wax, and mix in the Oil.

The above liniment is very emollient, and where there is a degree of scurfy dryness about the ear, generally removes it, if aided by due regulation of the system, from whence the evil originates.

Or another for the same purpose may be prepared thus:

Take Ointment of Marshmallows, fresh made, one  
drachm and a half,  
Oil of Sweet Almonds, one ounce.  
Mix and make a liniment.



If it is required to be a little stimulating, the following will be slightly so:

Take Compound Lead Cerate, half a drachm,  
Oil of Sweet Almonds, one ounce,  
Oil of Rosemary, 20 to 30 drops.  
Mix and make a liniment.

The same observation applies to the compound lead cerate, as to the simple cerate, therefore the form is also given:

Take of Solution of Subacetate of Lead, 2 fluid  
ounces and a half.  
Yellow Wax, four ounces,  
Olive Oil, nine fluid ounces,  
Camphor, half a dram.

Mix the wax previously melted with eight fluid ounces of the oil, then remove it from the fire, and when it begins to thicken, add gradually the solution of acetate of lead, constantly stirring the mixture with a wooden slice, till it gets



cold ; lastly mix in the remainder of the oil, in which the camphor has been previously dissolved.

If a stronger stimulative effect should be desired, the addition of the oil of turpentine, or of amber, or tincture of musk, or many other oils or tinctures, may be made ; but these should be used in all cases very cautiously, and never when there is a tendency to discharge, or pain in the ear. Indeed as competent surgical advice can be obtained by all persons, on terms suited to their circumstances, even gratuitously by the poor, it is the height of folly, to risque the loss of so valuable a sense, by using remedies, without first ascertaining, that they are proper for the nature of the complaint. These I have pointed out for external



application, are however perfectly safe, if properly used, and the ear not irritated by the too violent introduction of the cotton. Preparations containing ammonia, commonly called hartshorn, I never found useful in any one instance; in several, where the patients had themselves applied it with oils, gall, &c. very painful, and troublesome consequences ensued. It is, as I observed in my former work, a favorite remedy with many practitioners; but the repeated failures that have occurred, after a fair trial given to it, surely ought to induce men of common understanding, to resort to other remedies less painful, and more certain.

In some old persons, the glands from whence the ear-wax exudes, are often in a state of great relaxation, therefore the



cerumen, instead of being matured and healthy, appears white, and the orifices of the exuding glands, are prone to evince inflammation on the smallest exciting cause; in these cases I have found that syringing the ears, once a day, very gently with a lotion formed thus, has proved as good a topical application as could be used:

Take of Goulard's Extract, and Tincture of  
Musk, of each ten drops,  
Luke Warm Water, three ounces.

Mix.

And assisted by medicine, restored the hearing of a lady, aged 75, whose case was said to be nervous, and certainly she was troubled with those symptoms that generally characterize the complaint; such as noises in the head and ears, of many years standing.



Having pointed out the use of snuffs, and masticatories, which are sometimes adopted with a view to free the Eustachian tube of mucous obstructions, I proceed now to mention the use of gargles, being other *topical* applications for attaining the same end; but it is to be observed, that no gargle can reach the part affected, unless the patient lies down whilst using it. Various decoctions, or infusions, are proper for this purpose, either because they promote, by their own properties, the design in view, or are convenient menstruums for other articles of the *materia medica*, of these

Decoction of Marshmallows

———— Mezereon

———— Burr Dock

———— Chamomile

———— Quince Seeds



Decoction of Sarsaparilla

————— Sage

Infusion of Roses

————— Cloves

————— Lint Seed

Compound ditto of Horse-radish

To about eight ounces of any of these, selected according to the ideas of the case, may be added, syrup of mulberries, from one ounce to one ounce and a half, or honey of roses, or oxymel of squills, or clarified honey; and in some cases, tincture of myrrh, two to three drachms, and tincture of capsicum, from forty drops to one drachm and a half. In other instances, some of the above infusions or decoctions only, and a drachm of nitre dissolved therein, may be adopted with advantage.

In the case of a surgeon, aged 74, who had resided in the East Indies great part



of his life, and consulted me on account of deafness, which I conceived arose from obstruction of the Eustachian tube, one of the above gargles, cured him in three days ; and similar benefit has been derived by others, from using the same remedy.

I have, in my former work, and in some parts of this, slightly pointed out the evil attending the common mode resorted to, of inflating, as it is called, the drum of the ear ; proving, I trust, satisfactorily, that it is a fallacious mode of examination : I shall now, therefore, endeavour to shew, that it is injurious, by the mechanical pressure of the air against such a tender part as the drum of the ear. For instance, when the lungs are filled with air, and the mouth and nostrils



are closed firmly, considerable force is used by many persons in the act of blowing the nose. Those who are in the habit of doing this violently, are sensible of a singing or squeaking noise, appearing to come from their internal ear, particularly when they have a cold; this arises from the force used, having driven a portion of the mucus into the orifices of the Eustachian tubes, which naturally, from their formation, rejecting the extraneous substance, it makes that imaginary, and sometimes even real noise, by the mucus descending into the throat, and the air rushing into the passage; indeed, sometimes they suffer a temporary pain from this apparently trifling cause, which is produced by the pressure of air, against the delicate and highly sensible filaments of nerves and



muscles with which the membranes, or drums of the ears, are so abundantly provided; and by continued perseverance in the habit, a relaxation of this necessary part of the organ of hearing, is occasioned, very difficult to relieve. Where there is a large quantity of mucus in the nose, the force exerted may drive a portion of it far up, and even into the cavities at the upper part of the Eustachian tubes, and so produce deafness, and noises in the head, from an internal mechanical obstruction; in these cases, particularly when the evil is not deep seated, or of long standing, gargles may be successful; but the outer ear should also be examined, and it should be perfectly ascertained, that the cause does not exist partially, or wholly in the



outer part; as the same train of symptoms may appear, and yet the case be of a very different nature: for I have had many patients, who after being deaf from twenty to thirty years, and being told, by what *they thought good authority*, that their case was nervous, I relieved, or cured, by the extraction of hard wax from the bottom of the external auditory passage; which was instanced the day I wrote this, in the person of a lady turned of 70.

An attempt has been made to inculcate the idea, and it is positively asserted, that in the dissection of the ears of those persons who have been deaf for many years, there is always a quantity of inspissated wax at the bottom of the passage, in a very hard state; this proves



the truth of my observations, as to the imperfect manner in which the ears are examined; because if the ears were properly examined, this hard wax would be discovered in the living subject, and by the extraction of it, a cure in most instances, or relief in all, would be effected.

Another proof, if any more are necessary, of want of method, at least, in examining the ears, may be found in the case of a fine girl, brought to me after being subjected to the examination of many of the first surgical characters in this metropolis, she being deaf and dumb from a cold, taken as was supposed when 18 months old, through leaving off her cap, she was pronounced incurable, and the parents were advised to have nothing attempted; they however have placed



her with me, I discovered in both ears some extraneous substance, which to the astonishment of those who saw it extracted, proved to be a small sea shell, resembling that of a snail, from one ear, and a quantity of cotton wool from the other, these substances pressing externally against the delicate membrane, called the drum, caused a relaxation of it to take place, in addition to the other causes of deafness arising from cold: but time and attentive exertion will, I have no doubt, remove the effects occasioned by both these causes; the child now hears almost every sound, and I confidently hope, I shall perform a compleat cure. The father and mother recollect giving her the shells, much about the period of her deafness occurring.



It will be evident from what I have said, that I do not think favorably of the use of tobacco smoke, forced into the Eustachian tubes, as recommended by Count Orloff to Mr. Grovesnor of Oxford. Where there is a film-like obstruction at the orifice of the Eustachian tube, there is no doubt, that the force used in merely holding the breath, will in slight cases break it; but where the film obtains greater substance, the effort must be proportionably strong to produce that effect. Many persons have pursued this mode, till most serious affections of the eyes, or other complaints of the head, and even sudden death, have been the consequence. Indeed I was assured lately, on respectable authority, that the sudden decease of a gentleman, formerly



high in the East India Company's service, was caused by too violent efforts, in using this remedy.

Sea water, or bay salt, dissolved in water, have often been advised in these cases, called nervous deafness; but I have generally remarked, neither one nor the other produced a permanent benefit: probably their mere mechanical effects, where the ears are dry, may for a short time seem to increase the hearing, by the artificial moisture communicated to the auditory passage, or the more mechanical effect produced on cases of indurated cerumen by dissolving the wax, has acquired for them the reputation of specifics. In these latter cases, the soap lotion would have done much better, and assisted by a pro-



per use of the syringe, in a few minutes the deafness would have been cured.

There are many persons afflicted with deafness considered nervous, who are much better when near the sea, whether they bathe or not, but soon after they return home, are again afflicted as before; this does not arise so much, in my opinion, from the action of the sea air upon the organ of hearing, as from a difference in manner of living, and the exercise they take in viewing new scenes; which producing consequent exhilaration of the system, from the amusements attending a visit to the sea, a relaxation is afforded to the mind, from too much attention to the cares of the world. For I have found in most of the persons whose cases may be truly termed nervous, a degree of



hypochondriasis exists, which a change of scene very materially contributes to remove; yet to persons of this description, mercury is advised to be exhibited; with what *reasonable* expectation of benefit I am at a loss to imagine.

I have already mentioned the use of topical remedies to the external auditory passage, with the intention of producing an exudation of the cerumen, or ear-wax; also gargles and sternutatories, with a view to cleanse the Eustachian tubes; both which modes of treatment often cure cases, that certainly presented every symptom of the species denominated nervous deafness, and probably were truly so, in some instances: it remains, therefore, now necessary to point out, how far medical resources can be called in to aid our



other endeavours; but it may be first requisite to impress upon the minds of persons labouring under these deprivations, that most of their complaints arise from constitutional derangement, brought on by want of exercise, habits of life, or sometimes the troubles occasioned through intercourse with the world. This, to persons unacquainted with the subject, appears rather paradoxical, and I have frequently observed patients express surprise, on being informed that medicine must be resorted to, in order to cure, what to them, appeared mere local affections. Let it be granted that the case is nervous deafness; it is seldom imagined by the parties themselves, that the nerves of the ear are alone affected; they mostly complain of general nervous irritability,



with some or other of these symptoms, such as, want of appetite, nausea, heart-burn, flatulence, costiveness, chilliness of the extremities, dryness of the skin, low spirits, vertigo, head-aches, noises in the head, and a variety of other unpleasant feelings; all these are the natural consequences, and symptoms of the complaint termed dyspepsia, or in English, indigestion, which, suffered to proceed without interruption, becomes so fixed and constitutional, that it is removed only with great difficulty. Indeed the treatment of these symptoms are often very little calculated to relieve them; nervines are resorted to, such as preparations of steel, tinctures made with ardent spirits, bark, and a variety of other medicines, which in nine cases out of ten, if poured into



the stomach, as they too frequently are, in repeated doses; not only fail of giving relief, but even leave the sufferers in a worse state than they found them.

Most sensible and honest professional men, acknowledge the great uncertainty, as to the effects, which can be produced by medicine; for the human body is a laboratory, wherein there are so great a variety of ingredients, according to the different constitutions, that the same substances taken into the stomach of several individuals, will probably produce, in some degree, various effects on each; and these may again differ, either according to the previous quality, or quantity of nourishment taken, the temperament of the body, the state of mind, or other circumstances.



It is well understood, that some articles of the materia medica, are highly injurious to the constitution of man, and yet are given to animals with beneficial results; and others produce a most violent effect on the human race, but are totally inert, even in any quantity, when administered to some of the brute creation: in fact, medicine is in its infancy, and therefore the results of every man's experience and observation, when freely promulgated, without *sinister* views, are sure to be received with liberal consideration, by the enlightened part of the community. Under this impression, I proceed to mention the general effects I have observed produced by simple medicine, in these cases of nervous deafness; but first I shall offer some concise ob-



servations on the nature of digestion, which, I think, will clearly shew the evils, that may reasonably be expected from a vitiation, or interruption of its powers.

The food being reduced to a species of pulp, by the action of the teeth, and saliva, passes down into the stomach, where gently irritating the inner coat of that organ, a contraction of its two orifices are occasioned, during which the aliment, undergoes a chemical, vital, and mechanical process, from the agitation occasioned by the abdominal muscles, and of the diaphragm in breathing, the action of the muscular fibres of the stomach itself, and the gastric juice; by this process, the aliment taken into the stomach, becomes a sort of pap, called *chyme*, and is excluded through the right



orifice of the stomach, into the first portion of the intestinal canal. Here as the chyme passes the orifices of the ducts, leading to the liver and pancreas, they are stimulated to discharge their contents, from the former of which bile is communicated, and from the latter, a fluid similar to saliva, which mixing with, dilutes the acrimony of the more viscid bile; thus diluted the chyme is, in part, converted into *chyle*, which is separated from the general mass, as it descends through the smaller intestines, and by means of vessels and glands, is conveyed into the circulation, in conjunction with a fluid, called *lymph*, which is secreted from various parts of the system. The chyle mixing with the blood, is carried by the vein where it



enters, directly to the right side of the heart, whence it is forced into the lungs, to receive the oxygen, or vital part of the atmospheric air, and undergo a degree of chemical change; it is thence returned into the heart again, and distributed by the left side of that organ, through the arteries to all parts of the body, but mostly in proportion to the brain, through which, it is supposed, a sixth of the blood in the whole body is continually circulating, and from that source, there can be no doubt, although the process is not known to us, the nervous power is derived; whose astonishing rapidity of motion is such, that the mind no sooner wills an act, than the nerves of the part intended to be moved, instantly perform the intention.



Having thus, in a concise manner, shewn the process of digestion, the formation of its product partly into blood, and the undoubted origin of the nervous power; it must be evident, to a very superficial observer, that most of the nervous, and the far greater number of complaints which affect mankind, are to be traced to a want of tone in the digestive organs; whether that diminution of energy is occasioned by our modes of life, extraneous causes operating upon the system, or adventitious circumstances, is a subject of consideration: but it would lead me far beyond the limits of this work, to enter on these matters so fully as I could wish to do, I shall therefore briefly remark, that whatever may be the causes of nervous complaints generally,



or of the ears in particular, medicine, diet, and exercise, persevered in, but not carried to excess, are the most reasonable methods of obtaining a restoration, and when assisted by topical applications, seldom fail of producing the desired effect.

In point of diet, general directions may be useful; but it will be evident, that variations according to circumstances, must necessarily be made.

The quantity of food taken at any one time, should never be sufficient to produce satiety, and in order to prevent such an inclination, refreshment should be taken more frequently, than is the usual practice, especially amongst the higher, and studious orders of society.

The quality of the aliment, also requires attention; therefore that which



is most easy of digestion, should have a preference; on this head, most persons can judge from their own feelings, and observation. Wines too often receive a pernicious adulteration of metallic, or spirituous compounds, with a view to increase their strength, or give them flavor, and roughness; even if imported by the consumer, it will not always protect him, for the adulteration often takes place, before the wine is shipped for this country. Beer brewed by private individuals, agrees with some constitutions, and water only with others; but no unerring rule can be laid down, except, that, if the system becomes deranged in any of its parts; the person affected, should turn his consideration to the methods of living he has adopted; wherein,



on strict examination, he will often find something inimical to health, and which may reasonably be supposed the cause of the aberration, this of course, should be immediately altered; an increase or decrease of exercise; hours of taking food; periods of sleep, and every trifling occurrence ought to be reviewed; upon all which, any person possessing common intellectual faculties, can easily reason.

But it frequently happens, that the evil makes such slow insidious approaches, that amidst the bustle of active life, incident to the middle classes, or, the round of amusements of the higher orders of society, it is scarcely noticed, until it assumes a serious aspect, through adventitious circumstance of some excess, or neglect in mode of living, a too sudden



change of temperature of the body, exposure to wet and damp, or night air. Preventive methods are then no longer availing, more active proceedings become necessary, proportioned to the inroads the complaint has made, either locally, or constitutionally; in this situation, medicine must be called to assist, and relied on for relief. In common slight cases, a restoration of tone to the digestive organs, may be effected by simple medicines; observing to assist nature, by leaving them off, as gradually as possible, and by endeavours to obtain a degree of *regularity* of habit. The impossibility of advising medicine, to meet every particular case, is so evident, as to need no comment; therefore I shall claim indulgence, in offering the following prescriptions, which I have



found very serviceable, modified according to existing circumstances.

Take of the best Turkey Rhubarb, in powder, 20 to 30 grains, according to the patient; sugar a moderate sized lump; whilst rubbing these together, in a wedgewood, or glass mortar; add of Oil of Peppermint, or of Carraway, or of Cinnamon, 6 drops, and distilled water, near a small wine glassful.

This draught, simple as it appears, taken about an hour before rising, has in several cases, removed noises in the ears, attended with head-ache, vertigo, &c. particularly if recent attacks; in a day after, three to five grains of the aloetic pill with myrrh, or the compound gamboge pill, or compound aloetic pill, taken at bed-time, and repeated at intervals, prevents the constipation, which generally follows the use of rhubarb. To the



above rhubarb draught, two drachms of the compound tincture of cardamoms, or of senna, or of aloes, may be added according to circumstances; and the draught be repeated occasionally.

Pills formed of equal parts of the compound gamboge pill, extract of rhubarb, and the compound Ipecacuanha powder, with a few drops of the oil of carraway, are also very serviceable: or compound gamboge pill, and extract of rhubarb, each one drachm; extract of jalap, and compound ipecacuanha powder, each two scruples; oil of carraway, twenty drops; make a mass to be divided into pills, each three grains; two or even three of these may be taken every third or fourth day, with very beneficial results. Infusion of senna, made in the usual



way, one pint; manna dissolved in it, two ounces; compound tincture of cardamoms, six drachms; a wine glassful of this taken, every other morning, will often relieve that habitual constipation, generally attending nervous deafness: the dose to be reduced by degrees. Two ounces of phosphate of soda, dissolved in a wine bottle full of water, and a large wine glassful taken every morning, is very useful in many instances; one ounce of compound tincture of senna, or of cardamoms, and two ounces of manna, may be advantageously added.

If there is any disposition to piles, which commonly attends the deafness of those from warm climates; aloetic medicine must be avoided, and in this case, the following often cures—milk of sul-



phur, one ounce ; carbonate of magnesia, two drachms ; mix and take a tea spoonful, night and morning, in milk.

Should the deafness, or other affection of the organ of hearing, not yield to these mild, and innocent methods which I have pointed out, professional advice ought to be obtained ; but until that can be conveniently effected, no injury will possibly be sustained by a perseverance in the preceding treatment, provided, at the same time, the symptoms of the case, are taken into consideration.

As there are many persons afflicted with deafness, who hear much better in a coach, or during the continuance of a loud noise ; I have contrived an instrument, somewhat similar to a deep spoon, with a hollow to receive the ear, and by



placing it at the back of the ear, and bringing that organ forward; sounds are caught with greater facility, and conveyed in a louder, yet, with the natural vibration, to the senses. This instrument, is well adapted for the service of the above description of persons, whose sufferings arise from a relaxation of the membrane, or drum of the ear; to whom, and indeed to most, the ear-trumpets, from their conveying unnatural sounds, are highly injurious; as must be clearly evident, to every one at all acquainted with acoustics. The models of these instruments, I have had made in tin, and they answer very well; but those of beaten silver, much better. As I desire no emolument, on account of the invention, any person afflicted, is at liberty to see them at my



house, when I am at home, or they may be obtained in either silver or japanned tin, of those who manufacture such articles.

Since this work has been at press, I have seen in the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, a paper from Mr. Henry Earle, Surgeon to the Foundling Hospital, &c. respecting the thickening of the whole lining of the external auditory passage, and of the membrane itself, which he considers is a case, that has escaped the notice of all authors on deafness. The attempts of the general practitioner, to acquire a knowledge of the treatment of diseases of the ear, should be encouraged by every liberal-minded man, and the above gentleman is certainly deserving of great commendation, in giving the result of any particu-



lar mode of treatment to the world, which he conceives has proved beneficial; as I have received personal civility, and been consulted by his desire, I therefore feel it necessary to observe, that my observations, commencing at page 6, were written before I saw, or heard of his paper, and are not intended to allude to him. At the same time, I do not see any thing in his statement, to induce me to alter my opinion, as to the impropriety of using *a strong solution of lunar caustic*, (nitrate of silver :) for from the account he gives of his first patient, I have no doubt, but the methods I have mentioned, would have succeeded more speedily: as was instanced in the case of the clergyman, page 32 of this address, whose case was similar to the first he mentions; but was



cured in two or three days, and the film, or skin I extracted, from his ears, without any pain, I still preserve. The other case he relates, is nothing extraordinary, being common and usual practice; it shews however the *truth* of his remarks, that affections of the ears, are not understood by the general practitioner.

Mr. Earle is, I think, incorrect, in stating that no author has noticed these dispositions of the external auditory passage to diseased action; as he will be convinced, by referring to page 17, 24, and 39, of my former Essay on the Ear; and I have variety of the substances which I have taken from the external auditory passage, illustrative of the facts I mention.

FINIS.







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